The Cornish in southwest Wisconsin /

THE CORNISH IN SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN. BY LOUIS ALBERT COPELAND, B. L.

The material for this sketch of the Cornish in Southwest Wisconsin has not been obtained, in any considerable extent, tent, from books or newspapers. No article, written upon this subject, has been found. All the information here given—little as it is—has been obtained in conversation with pioneers1 of the lead region, and by personal observation of the manners and customs of the Cornish settlers.

1 I have been aided in this work by the following: Elijah C. Townsend and William Osborne, Shullsburg; Dr. John H. Vivian, Edward Prideaux, and Mrs. Davy, Mineral Point; Thomas James, Dodgeville; Thomas Jenkins, Platteville; John W. Taylor, Linden; Charles L. Harper, assistant State superintendent of schools, Madison; Gen. Thomas S. Allen, Oshkosh; the late James B. Brown, editor of the Galena *Gazette*, and the late George Verden, of Galena.

The Cornish are Celts, and come from Cornwall, the most southern and western county in England. When Anglo-Saxons invaded England, during the latter part of the fifth century, they drove the resident Celts into the mountainous regions of the west, into Wales and Cornwall; but it was not until the first part of the ninth century that the invaders were able to subdue them. Despite the fact that the Cornish have been under Anglo-Saxon rule over a thousand years, they have in a slight degree maintained a Celtic civilization. Ask a Cornishman in southwest Wisconsin — a “Cousin Jack,” as he is pleased to style himself—where he is from, and he will invariably tell you, not “England,” but “Cornwall.” On the other hand, ask a man of Devonshire, Yorkshire, or any other part of England the same question, and he will say “England,” not naming the county unless more closely questioned.

The physical nature of Cornwall determined the occupation of the people. A large part of the county is mountainous, and is surrounded on all sides but one by water. Almost all the people are engaged in mining, fishing, or farming; until recently, the miners have far outnumbered the other classes, but at present the agricultural class is gaining rapidly. Mining has declined; in some cases the mines have been worked out, and in others they have been worked so deep that it is not profitable to hoist the ore, although it is of a comparatively rich quality, and the machinery is the best of its kind. Thus many of the Cornish have been thrown out of employment and have sought work in other countries. Several thousand of them came to the upper Mississippi lead region1 during its early development.

1 The boundary of the lead region in Wisconsin is given by Moses M. Strong, in his *History of Wisconsin Territory*, as follows: “In Wisconsin, the lead region may be said to be bounded on the north by the northern outcrop of Galena limestone, running parallel to the main water-shed from the Mississippi to Blue Mounds; on the west by the Mississippi river; on the south by the State line, and on the east by Sugar River. These limits include all the lead that has ever been productive, as well as much that has never proved so.” For maps of the district, see Libby's “Helena Shot Tower,” *Wis. Hist. Colls*., xiii, p. 373; also, xi, p. 400.

The earliest history and first occupation of the lead region are enshrouded in almost impenetrable obscurity. Probably the first white man to explore this region was Nicolas Perrot, the famous French fur trader, in 1690. In 1693, and in 1700, Le Sueur, commandant for the French at Chequamegon Bay, made extensive explorations in the district; in August, 1700, he discovered Galena (or Fever) River. Julien Dubuque, another Frenchman, settled in 1788 in the place where now stands the city that bears his name. “the first permanent settlement” by white men, on the east side of the Mississippi River, “of

which any record or reliable knowledge remains, existed about 1820 on the banks of the river now known as the Galena,”2 near the

2 See *Hist. of Jo Daviess Co., Ill*. (Chicago, 1878), p. 227; also Thwaites's “Notes on Early Lead Mining,” *Wis. Hist. Colls*., xiii, pp. 273 et seq.

303 site of the present city of Galena, Ill. Prior to 1820 this site was occupied by Indians, being a favorite fur-trading post. The roving traders came, sometimes built a rough cabin, staid a few months, and moved on.

Seymour, in his history of the Galena mines (published in 1848), says, on the authority of Jesse W. Shull, that previous to 1819 “the Sacs and Foxes had already killed several traders who had attempted to traffic among them.” In 1819, Shull came to Fever River and erected a trading house where Galena now stands. He told Seymour that he and Dr. Samuel Muir were the first white settlers on the Fever. François Bouthillier was at the same point, later in the year. A. P. Van Metre located here, it is said, in 1820.1 In 1821, several miners are known to have been for a time in this locality. During the same year, Thomas H. January and wife came and built a double log cabin;. this is the first we hear of a white woman in the lead region. In 1822, James Johnson of Kentucky, with a party of white men and slaves, began mining near Galena. Strong2 says that this was the first occupation of the lead mines by white men. From this date, at the latest, begins the real settlement of the region. In 1823, the Meeker colony, from Cincinnati, headed by Dr. Moses P. Meeker, arrived; there were in the party about thirty men, and several women and children. When Meeker came, he found less than a hundred white men in the settlement, but, this number soon rapidly increased. Strong, in his estimates of the white population of the region, gives the following figures:

1 *Hist. of Jo Daviess Co*., p. 236.

2 *Hist. of Wis. Terr*., p. 117.

1822 20

1823 74

1824 100

1825 200

1826 1,000

1897 4,000

1828 10,000

Almost all the population of these earliest years was the vicinity of Galena, which was the objective point of the early immigrants, being the natural entrance to the lead region, and as the largest settlement it afforded 304 more security against Indians. Soon the mines in the immediate vicinity of Galena were unable to meet the demands of the thousands of adventurers who were flocking to them. As a consequence, miners began to prospect in new fields. “Mines were soon opened at Hardscrabble, Council Hill, Vinegar Hill, East Fork, New Diggings, Buncombe, Gratiot's Grove, Shullsburg, Stump Grove, Wiota, Sinsinawa Mound, Platteville, Mineral Point, Dodgeville”1 and many other points.

1 Strong, p. 118.

The first mines to be operated in southwest Wisconsin by permanent settlers, were opened in 1824 at New Diggings, in La Fayette county, and Hazel Green, in Grant county. “In 1824, Duke L. Smith, George Ferguson, James Morrison, and three or four others started out from Galena, found indications of ancient mining by Indians and French, and there beginning work discovered valuable mines which they named New Diggings.”2 “In 1824, Thomas McKnight, John Ewin, and several others made the first mining settlement

at Hardscrabble (Hazel Green).”3 During the succeeding three years, mines in every section of the Wisconsin lead region were opened.

2 *Hist. of La Fayette Co*., p.563.

3 *Hist. of Grant Co*., p. 478.

Among the prominent settlers who came to the Wisconsin mines before the Cornish immigration set in, were Henry and J. P. B. Gratiot, of St. Louis, who opened. mines on the edge of a grove about one mile south of the present Shullsburg. The settlement took the name of “Gratiot's Grove;” it was once a flourishing mining town, but there is now little trace of settlement there. Col. Samuel Scales—after whom Scales Mound, Ill., was named—came in 1825. Jesse W. Shull, after whom Shullsburg was named, settled in New Diggings in 1826; he was a trader in this section of the country before 1820. Col. Daniel M. Parkinson settled in the same place during the year. Col. William S. Hamilton, a son of Alexander Hamilton, settled in the eastern part of what is now La Fayette 305 county, about this time; he build Hamilton's Fort during the Black Hawk War, and afterwards laid out and named the village of Wiota.

Almost all of the early inhabitants in the lead region, under the American regime, were natives of this country. There were two classes of miners; one came—especially from southern Illinois—during the spring, and returned down the south-flowing rivers in the fall; this class was nicknamed from the fish whose habits it imitated— “suckers.” The other class, being largely from New England and New York State, were obliged to live in the region during the winter, in “dugouts” like badgers1 —hence their nickname. The first foreigners to settle in the district, at least in considerable number, were the Cornish. In March, 1827, there arrived in Galena, Francis Clyma,2

1 The manner in which the people of Illinois and Wisconsin derived their respective nicknames, is told in Thwaites's *Story of Wisconsin*, p. 205.

2 “Francis Clyma was born in the parish of Perran Zabouloe, Cornwall, England, March 16, 1792, and died in Apple River, Ill., Sept. 19, 1874. He was married to Frances J. Maynard in 1815. He emigrated to America in 1819, leaving his family in England, and engaging in mining in Maryland. After a period of two years, his wife joined him in America, landing in Alexandria in 1821. In this year, Mr. Clyma was sent, by the company for whom he labored, to Orange Co., Va., to prospect for copper in the Blue Ridge mountains. Ore in paying quantities, not being found in this locality, the company moved their works to Fauquier Co., Va. This prospecting also proved a failure, and Mr. Clyma, with his family, now consisting of wife and four children, removed again to Maryland, settling near Baltimore. After a residence here of less than one year, he, with his family moved west of the mountains and settled in Berry's Lick, Butler Co., Ky., where he engaged in the manufacture of salt. In Dec., 1826, leaving his family in Ky., he crossed the Missisippi river into Missouri and began mining in the Valley mines. In the following March, he, in partnership with a Frenchman named Fuzone, were attracted to the lead region of the Northwest, arriving at the place now called Galena, about the middle of March, 1827, having made the journey from Rock Island on foot. After a few weeks prospecting, the party ‘struck a lead’ and Mr. 20 Clyma returned to Kentucky for his family. They arrived at ‘The Point’ — now Galena — on July 28, 1827, in the midst of the excitement known as the Winnebago War. The lode opened by Mr. Clyma was on what is termed ‘the Gratiot survey,’ near Gratiot's Grove, whither Mr. Clyma moved his family. In the following Sept., his family was moved into Ferguson's Fort, within the inclosure of which he built a house which he continued to occupy long after the fort had been dismantled. In 1831, he moved his family to the farm, he cleared and improved, and upon which he lived and labored until 1865, when he took up his residence in Apple River. He was in the frontier service during the Black Hawk War, serving as a Lieutenant. In 1845 he made a trip to Cuba, for the recuperation of his failing health. In 1850 he went to California, where he remained two years. He visited the land of his nativity twice, first in 1856 and again in 1870.”— Galena *Gazette*, Sept. 17, 1876.

306 undoubtedly the first Cornishman to come to the Upper Mississippi lead region. He immediately began to prospect, and opened a mine near Shullsburg, Wis., about eighteen miles northeast of Galena. This was probably the first mining to be done in this section of the country by the class of people who did so much to develop the lead region. Soon, Clyma returned to Kentucky and brought his family with him. To Mrs. Clyma1 undoubtedly belongs the distinction of being the first Cornishwoman in the region.

1 Mrs. Frances T. Clyma was born in the parish of St. Ewe, Cornwall, July 16, 1798. She was married to Francis Clyma in 1815, came to America in 1821, and to the lead region in 1827. She died in Monticello, Wis., June 13, 1879.

From 1827 to 1830, there is no record of any Cornishman immigrating hither. This is not entirely without explanation. Clyma was in America when the fame of the rich lead mines went abroad, and of course he heard of them long before the reports spread across the Atlantic, and reached the people in secluded Cornwall. If any Cornish came to the lead region during these three years, it is probable that they did not come direct from their native land, but, were in America some years before. In 1830, there set in, direct from Cornwall, a stream of immigration that lasted over twenty years.

Several of the oldest citizens of Mineral Point agree that the first man buried in the old cemetery there, was a, Cornishman named Josiah Thomas, but they cannot agree upon the date. The *History of Iowa Co.* 2 says that he was

2 P. 724.

307 buried there in 1830, but places a query after the date, showing uncertainty. It is probable, however, that that date is a few years too early. In 1830, Edward James,1 a Cornish miner, came to Mineral Point. He was the first, or among the first, of his people to come to the region, directly from the old country. In the same year, Joseph Rowe2 came to Galena, and, like most of the Cornish immigrants, engaged in mining. In 1831, Joseph James,3 accompanied by his family, came to Mineral Point. He was a brother of Edward,

the immigrant of the year before, and had been induced to come hither by the glowing reports sent home by the latter. In 1832, Francis Vivian4 arrived at Mineral

1 Edward James was born in Camborne parish, Cornwall, in 1804. He came to Mineral Point by way of Quebec, Cincinnati, and St. Louis in 1830. He was a brave, intellectual, but rather restless man. From 1830 to 1832, he engaged in mining near Mineral Point. In the latter year, he enlisted in the Black Hawk War, and was with Dodge in the battle of Bad Ax and in many other skirmishes. After the war, he and Dodge engaged in mining at Dodgeville. When the latter was commissioned the first governor of the Territory, in 1836, he appointed James as his private secretary, and on June 19, 1837, commissioned him as marshal of the Territory; James was the second person to hold that office, which he did until March 15, 1841. Soon after this he removed to Missouri, and is supposed to have died near St. Louis, about 1845.

2 Joseph Rowe was born in Camborne parish. It is not known whether he came to the lead region directly from Cornwall, or not. He mined for some years near Galena, and then moved to a farm near Apple River, where he died in the 55th year of his age.

3 Joseph James was born in Camborne parish, in 1802, and emigrated to America by way of Quebec, in 1831. His wife (née Maria Eva) came with him. tie engaged in mining for some time, near Mineral Point, thence removed to Dodgeville, where he began to farm. He was in the Black Hawk War, being stationed at the fort in Mineral Point, and died of cholera in 1850.

4 Francis Vivian was born in Camborne parish, Feb. 19, 1801. He came to Mineral Point by way of New Orleans, in 1832, and almost immediately after arriving, enlisted in the Black Hawk War. The war over, he engaged in mining, then became a smelter, and finally a store-keeper. In 1865, being elected county treasurer on the Republican ticket, he removed to Dodgeville, the county seat. He held this office for sixteen successive years. He died March 14, 1884, aged 83 years.

308 Point with his family. Matthew Edwards1 and wife2 were in the same party. Mark and Stephen Terrell3 came to Dodgeville this year. In the *History of Iowa Co.* 4 we find the following: “Among those who came about this time (1832) was a colony of hale, hearty, strong-muscled and stronger-hearted Cornish pick and gad artists, composed in part of John Curthew, William Kendall, and William Bennett.”5 Gilbert Bennett6 arrived in Dodgeville during the same year. In 1832, James Prideaux7 and William Prideaux8 also settled in Mineral Point and began to mine. Edward Prideaux, who came to Mineral Point in an early day, says that John Edwards, a Cornish miner, was in the Black Hawk War; if so, he must have come to the lead mines in 1832 or before. Several old settlers say that Abner Nichols, a Cornishman, was in the same war. In the *History of Iowa Co.* 9 we find “among those who came [to Mineral Point] previous to 1832 were * * * Abner Nichols, Edward James, Mark and Stephen Terrell.”

1 Matthew Edwards was a native of Camborne parish. He came to Mineral Point in 1832, by way of New Orleans. Soon after arriving, he enlisted in the Black Hawk War, and died in 1864.

2 Mrs. Matthew Edwards was also born in Camborne parish, March 17, 1807, and came with her husband to Mineral Point in 1832. She died at Beetown, Grant county, in 1892.

3 They were brothers, being born in Camborne parish. Both were miners. Stephen served in the Black Hawk War, and died in 1835.

4 P. 770.

5 William Bennett was born in Camborne parish, and came directly to the lead region in 1832. He enlisted and served in the Black Hawk War. After this he engaged in mining and finally became a store-keeper, and died in 1882.

6 Gilbert Bennett is a brother of William, and came with him to this country. He is still living (1896), in California.

7 James Prideaux was born in Illogan parish, Cornwall, July 5, 1809. He settled in Mineral Point in 1832, served in the Black Hawk War, and afterwards engaged in mining. He died in Bloomington, Grant county, Nov. 2, 1886.

8 William Prideaux was a cousin of James, and like him, came from Illogan parish to Mineral Point in 1832, served in the Black Hawk War, and engaged in mining.

9 P. 658.

309

In 1833, Henry Eva1 and family settled among the people of Dodgeville; he was accompanied by his nephew, John Eva Bartle.2 Other Cornishmen who arrived during this year, were Michael Poad,3 Thomas Phillips,4 James Nancarrow.5 William James6 and James James,7 two brothers, came to Mineral Point in the same year. They were brothers of Edward and Joseph James, who arrived in 1830 and 1831, respectively.

1 Henry Eva was born in 1808 in Camborne parish. He came to Dodgeville in 1833, by way of Quebec, St. Louis, and Galena. He engaged in mining and butchering for many years, and in 1850 went to San Francisco, where he died two years later.

2 John Eva Bartle, a nephew of Henry Eva, was born in Camborne parish, 1822. He was too young while in his native land to learn to mine, and consequently did not do much of it here. He engaged in butchering, with his uncle. He made.two trips to California, one in 1850, the other in 1855. On his second return to Dodgeville, he went into the furniture business, and died in that place in 1892.

3 Michael Poad was born in Cornwall, Jan. 6, 1806. In 1832, he emigrated to Ohio, and in the following year came to Linden,—then called Peddler's Creek,— and worked in the mines. He built the first house in Linden in 1835.

4 Thomas Phillips was born in Camborne parish, in 1799. He came to Mineral Point in 1833, and engaged in mining until his death, which occurred in 1859.

5 The *History of Iowa Co.*, p. 660, says: “The first copper ore was discovered here as early as 1833 by William Kendall and James Nancarrow.” Both were Cornishmen.

6 William James was born in Camborne parish, in 1800. Soon after his arrival here he moved to Dodgeville, where he mined for many years, and died in 1855.

7 James James, familiarly known as “Uncle Jimmie James,” was born in Camborne parish, in 1798. For many years he was a blacksmith in Mineral Point, but in later life moved to Des Moines, where he died in 1892. Both James and William James had families when they arrived in this region.

In 1834, we find among the names of the organizers of the Methodist Episcopal church at Mineral Point, William Phillips and wife, Andrew Rumphery, Mrs. S. Thomas, and James Nancarrow. These are all Cornish names. In 310 the same year, John Tregaskis, James Glanville,1 and Matthew Bishop2 arrived in Mineral Point. John Bilkey3 and a party of Cornishmen, consisting of William Fine, Joe Stephens, Stephen Lane, William Nichols, and Andrew Crowgy, came to Mineral Point by way of Quebec and Detroit, proceeding to the lead region from the latter city in a wagon. On their way up, they passed through the village of Chicago, which then consisted of a few scattering houses. Thomas Prisk4 settled in Mineral Point during the spring of the same year.

1 James Glanville was born in Cornwall, Sept. 8, 1808. He arrived in Mineral Point in July, 1834, and in 1836 removed to Linden, where he engaged in mining. He was town treasurer for 27 years.

2 Matthew Bishop was born in Camborne parish in 1818. In 1833 he immigrated to Pottsville, Penn., and engaged in coal mining for a year. In 1834 he removed to Mineral

Point, where he became a lead miner. He married Miss Mary Bilkey in 1838. Mr. Bishop differed from most Cornishmen in politics, being a Democrat. He died in 1872.

3 John Bilkey was born in Camborne parish in 1810. In 1834 he settled in Mineral Point with a party of Cornishmen. In 1852 he went to California, but soon returned to Dodgeville and went to farming, dying there in 1893.

4 Thomas Prisk was born in Cornwall, Sept., 1805. He emigrated to the United States in 1833, and came to the lead region in 1834. Prisk engaged in mining until the time of his death.

The above no doubt comprise a large majority of the Cornish miners who—many of them with families—arrived in the Wisconsin lead region previous to 1835. Of course some came and have left no record accessible to the historian, but these must be few. It is probable that the number of Cornish in the region before 1835 was between 75 and 100. From this time forward, the number increased so rapidly that only a large history of the region could have space for their names. Each year brought more and more Cornish, all eager to work the rich mines. The Cornish immigration continued increasing until about the year 1850. In reading the biographies of Cornishmen in the county histories, and in questioning the immigrants themselves, we find very few Cornishmen who came after that year. 311 About this time the news of the discovery of gold in California reached Cornwall, and thenceforward the bulk of emigrants went thither; so we can safely say that Cornish immigration to the Wisconsin lead mines practically ceased in 1850.

Of the total number of Cornish who came to our lead region, we can now make only an estimate. It could not have been many thousand, as we can readily see by examining the following census reports of La Fayette, Grant, and Iowa counties, which include all the territory in Wisconsin occupied by these people:

1834 2,632

1836 3,218

1838 7,900

1840 8,200

1842 11,000

1846 26,000

1847 29,000

1850 37,000

The Cornish at no period exceeded in number a fifth of the total population of the district. Should we estimate their number in 1850 at that ratio, there would be about 7,000 of them, and there were more Cornish immigrants in the lead region then than before or since. It was just before the rush to California set in, which took away so many of Wisconsin's Cornish miners. To arrive at a closer estimate of the number of Cornish immigrants, let us examine the following census reports of the principal Cornish settlements, and make an estimate of the proportion of Cornishmen to the entire population:1

1 Regarding this estimated proportion of Cornish in the different settlements, there is little difference of opinion. Many of the oldest settlers in all these places have been interviewed, and they agree generally on the proportions here given, i.e., one-half of Dodgeville, Mineral Point, and Hazel Green, three-fourths of Linden, and one-fourth of Shullsburg.

Population. Probable Cornish. Mineral Point 2,110 1,100 Dodgeville 2,580 1,300 Hazel Green 1,840 950 Linden 950 750 Shullsburg 1,600 400 4,500 312

In order to reach an estimate of the total Cornish immigration to Wisconsin, we must take into consideration such places as Platteville, Benton, Cornish Hollow, British Hollow, Jefferson, New Diggings, and a host of smaller places. Neither must the territory

surrounding these mining centers be disregarded, for many Cornish had, before 1850, begun farming on a small scale. Including these, we can safely conclude that the Cornish immigrants numbered not less than 6,000. Some of the Cornish settled near Galena and in other mining settlements in northwest Illinois, such as Vinegar Hill, Council Hill, Scales Mound, Apple River, Warren, and Guilford. If we take into consideration the entire lead region, there is little doubt that there were 7,000 native-born Cornish here in 1850,—in other words, the total Cornish immigration to the Upper Mississippi lead region was about 7,000.1

1 These final figures are the sums of local estimates made by the best living authorities in the different localities. They are published merely to give a general idea of the extent of the Cornish immigration to the lead region. There are no statistics available, for a closer estimate.

To-day, the Cornish and their descendants constitute about a third of Mineral Point and Dodgeville, a little over a half of Linden and Hazel Green, a fourth of Shullsburg, and a small proportion of Platteville, Benton, and many smaller places. The following table shows the probable number of Cornish in 1890, in the principal Cornish settlements in southwest Wisconsin:

Population.2 Probable Cornish. Mineral Point 4,000 1,400 Linden 1,800 1,000 Hazel Green 2,000 1,100 Dodgeville 3,300 1,100 Shullsburg 1,800 400 5,000

2 These are round numbers of the city and town population, as given in the U. S. census for 1890.

It will be seen that the proportion of the Cornish living in these settlements to-day is not as large as in 1850. 313 They have, in large numbers, taken to farming, and are so scattered that we can find some of them in every part of the lead region, and engaged in almost every line of industry. Taking these things into consideration, it is probable able that the

total number of pure-blooded Cornish in the, lead region is, at the present time, about 10,000.

The question arises, why did the Cornish leave their ancestral homes for this wild and rough region? Was it because of the great advantages of the new country, or the disadvantages of the old, or both? Upon being questioned, most of the old immigrants now living said that they were induced to come by the glowing accounts of the mines that were sent home by some relatives or friends who had preceded them. Tracing this back a step further, we find that there were some Cornish in this country when the fame of the lead region went abroad. From these few, the news soon spread to Cornwall; thus the original colony rapidly increased. Their reason for leaving Cornwall and coming to Wisconsin was purely an economic one. The mines in the old land had begun to decline, they were ceasing to be good investments, consequently the wages of the operatives were low. The average wages in the mines, was from $12 to $13 a month. The mine laborers thought they could do better in America.

The reports of these old Cornish immigrants regarding the stories of southwest Wisconsin, that were then current in Cornwall, are amusing. Lead ore was said to be so plentiful that it stuck out of the ground in different places, waiting for some one to mine it; the mines were rich, it is true, but the truth was exaggerated. Many of the Cornish confidently expected to get rich in a short time, and then return to Cornwall. They did not become wealthy, as they expected, but the conditions into which they had come were certainly better than those they had left.

The miner who, in the 30's, worked for wages in the Wisconsin lead region, was an exception. Nearly every one operated for himself; for this reason, it is difficult to gather wage statistics covering those early times, A miner's 314 wages during the 30's and 40'ss was about a dollar a day; most of the old miners now living agree on this rate. The *Miners' Journal* 1 of May 9, 1832, has the following statement: “Laborers receive from $15 to $20 per month and their board.” When we take into consideration the high prices paid in the

lead region at this time, we recognize that $15 per month and board is the equivalent of a dollar per diem. There are instances of men receiving higher wages than this. We read in a biographical sketch published in the *History of Iowa County* that “John Bilkey hired out to Stephen Terrell, in Mineral Point, in 1834, for $40 per month.” The Cornish considered a dollar a day in America better than fifty cents a day in Cornwall. Of course the prices of necessities of life were much lower in England than here, nevertheless this difference was not equal to the international difference in wages. A comparison of prices between the particular sections of the two countries is difficult. Cornish statistics, if there were any at this time, cannot be obtained here. A list of articles has been submitted to several Cornish, who immigrated about 1840, with the request that they give the prices as they remember them. The variations in the answers have been slight.

1 Published at Galena, Ill.

Qualities of calico that cost from 8c to 10c in Cornwall, in 1840, could not then be purchased in Wisconsin for less than 15c a yard. A suit of clothes costing $15 in Cornwall, could not be bought here for less than $25. In July, 1827, the county commissioners' court of Jo Daviess county, Ill., fixed the standard charges of the hotels as follows: Lodging, 12½ per night, and each meal 37½c in other words, $1.25 per day. The average charges of the hotels in Cornwall, in the 30's, was about 75c per day. The rates here given, were the cheapest in both places. All the old Cornish settlers state that they have bettered themselves financially, in Wisconsin. Wages here were twice those in the old country, but the prices of the necessities of life were not double those in England.

315

The following table, although incomplete, shows that the immigrating Cornish were far better off, financially, in America:

ENGLAND.1 WISCONSIN.2 Cornwall England 1830. 1736 1850. about 1840. in 1849. Beef per lb $ .12 $ .14 $ .14–15 Butter per lb .14 .30 .15 .25–.31 .15–.20 Potatoes per bu .12 .37½ .50–.62 Tea per lb 1.25 1.25 1.00 Sugar per lb .12 .10½ .12–.13 05–.06 Flour per cwt 10.00 8.00 9.00 8.00–9.00 3.50–4.00

1 The first column gives the prices in Cornwall as recollected by the old Cornish settlers in Wisconsin. The second is taken from Brassey's *Work and Wages*. (N. Y., 1883.)

2 The prices for 1830 are taken from the *Miners' Journal* of Jan. 9, Of that year; this was the first newspaper published in Galena. The prices in the second column were taken from the Galena *Gazette and Advertizer*, of May 1, 1836; those in the third column, from the *Wis. Tribune* (Mineral Point) of Jan. 4, 1850.

Besides this financial reason, they preferred Wisconsin to Cornwall, because of its opportunity for ownership. No mine laborer in Cornwall owned his own mine; while in Wisconsin he did, or at least had an opportunity to do so. No capital was required to start a mine in the Wisconsin lead region, and if the miner paid rent it was simply a small proportion of the ore mined. This opportunity was a great attraction for the Cornish.

Most of the Cornish who immigrated to Wisconsin came from Camborne and its vicinity. Camborne is one of the largest towns in Cornwall, having a population in 1890 of 8,000. It is situated in the western half of the county, in the center of the best mining district. When we remember that all the Cornishmen who settled in Wisconsin were miners, we see why most of them should come from this particular district.

They came to Wisconsin by many different routes; the 316 two principal ports of embarkation were Penzance and Falmouth, on the southern coast of Cornwall. During the period 1830 to 1845, almost all of them came by way of St. Louis and Galena. They reached St. Louis in many different ways. Some landed at New Orleans, others at Philadelphia, New York, and Montreal. We find frequent mention in the newspapers of the time, of English coming to the Northwest; but as might be expected, none speak of the Cornish. Those who landed at New Orleans were few; they simply changed boats, and came up the river to Galena. Those who disembarked at New York reached St. Louis by two different routes. Some went up the Hudson River to Albany, then took the Erie Canal to Buffalo; thence they followed the route taken by those who landed at Montreal, i.e.,

through the Great Lakes to either Toledo or Cleveland, thence by canal to the Ohio River, and by that to St. Louis. Others who landed at New York took the railroad to Philadelphia, and thence the route followed by those who landed at that city; they went to Columbia, Pa., by railroad, thence to Hollidaysburg by canal, thence to Johnstown by the Portage railroad, thence by canal to Pittsburg, and down the Ohio River to St. Louis, thence to Galena. Arriving at Galena, they hired teams and were taken to their destination. After 1845, and possibly a few years before, the Cornishmen came mostly by way of Montreal, the St. Lawrence, and the Great Lakes, to Milwaukee, thence by team to the lead region.1

1 This date corresponds, in some degree, to the statements made in Libby's “Significance of the lead and shot trade in early Wisconsin History,” *Wis. Hist. Colls*., xiii, where he states that the lead and shot of the region began to be hauled to Milwaukee as early as 1839, and that “we may fairly conclude from the evidence offered that by 1847 the overland lead trade to Milwaukee was well established.” The opening of this less expensive and shorter way to the region, was soon known by the Cornish, and they took advantage of it.

#All the Cornish did not come even in the numerous ways mentioned, yet the exceptions are few. The voyage from Cornwall to America was slow; sometimes sailing vessels took over two months to cross the ocean. From the 317 point of landing, to Galena, the trip was comparatively rapid.

The question arises, why did most of the Cornish settle in Wisconsin, instead of staying near Galena? As previously stated, the principal mines at first were about Galena, but when the miners began to pour in, in great numbers, the district was found too small. Gradually, the circle of settlements about Galena enlarged, and in 1827 mines were opened at Dodgeville,1 Mineral Point, and Linden,2 which are near the northern boundary of the lead region. In 1880, when the Cornish began to come directly from Cornwall to Wisconsin, these miners were the best in the region. This is one reason, and probably the most important, why these three places became the principal Cornish settlements. Those

who arrived first, of course sent reports back to Cornwall of the rich mines in the vicinity of these settlements; relatives and friends naturally followed their predecessors. Although a majority of the Cornish came hither, they soon scattered to the neighboring towns. Many of them settled in places where the mines had been opened a number of years, or where they knew there was a good prospect of getting “mineral.”3 Speaking generally, the Cornish were not adventurous outside of a mine. They would prospect in any vicinity in which good lead had been found, but would never go far from it. Almost all the new mining districts were opened up by the Americans, Cornish either following their lead or staying and working out the old mines. Hence we find Cornish in all the mining settlements, both old and new. Many of them settled in Hazel Green,4 Platteville, Shullsburg, and smaller places, including

1 Named in honor of Henry Dodge, the first Territorial governor of Wisconsin.

2 First called Peddler's Creek, because the mines were discovered by Patrick O'Meara, the “Dodgeville Peddler.”

3 The word “mineral” is used in a special sense in the lead region, meaning lead ore or galena.

4 First called “Hardscrabble.” Capt. Charles McCoy gave the place its present name, from the density of hazel brush growing near there.

318 White Oak Springs, Black Leg, Gratiot's Grove, Twelve Mile House, Fawcet's Hollow, Cornish Hollow, British Hollow, Potosi,1 Jefferson, Bull Branch, Coon Branch, Mifflin,2 Benton,3 and others. Some of these places exist now only in name.

1 Known once as Snake Hollow.

2 Formerly known as Black Jack.

3 Named in honor of Thomas H. Benton, senator from Missouri.

To-day, the principal Cornish settlements are to be found within the district including the southwestern part of La Fayette county, the northwestern part of Jo Daviess county, Ill., the southeastern part of Grant county, and almost all the southern half of Iowa county—diminishing in the extreme eastern part. The settlement in the southeastern part of Grant extends far enough northward to connect with the settlements in the southern part of Iowa, thus making the two districts contiguous. In other words, they finally settled in those sections where the mines were richest and held out the longest; the district mentioned includes almost all of the mining region that is being worked at the present time. The following may give some idea of the distribution of the Cornish in the lead region, to-day, on the supposition that there are 10,000 in all:

Iowa Co. 5,000 or one-half.

Grant Co. 2,500 or one-fourth.

La Fayette Co. 1,000 or one-tenth.

Jo Daviess Co., Ill. 1,500 or about one-seventh

In the early 50's, a large proportion, possibly a half, of the Cornish miners left the Wisconsin lead region for the gold fields of California.4 Mining operation's were almost suspended, as is shown by the output of the mines at that period; stores were closed, and property deserted, in the wild rush for the new gold diggings. The population of the mining towns, and in fact of the whole mining district, decreased rapidly. It is said by those who were here at

4 The *Hist. of Grant Co*., p. 490, has the following: “It is estimated that two-thirds of the miners left for the gold fields.”

319 the time, that the Cornish exodus fully equalled in proportion that of the other nationalities in the region. Of those who left, probably three-fourths returned, for most

of them had left families here. The proportion of the other nationalities who returned, probably did not reach a half.

The manners and customs of the Cornish in Wisconsin are in some respects peculiar and interesting. Their occupation was, of course, mining. A few of them had been farmers in Cornwall, but turned to mining on arrival here. Land for farming purposes was at first regarded as almost worthless; no Cornishman thought of farming in Wisconsin.1 It was customary for the men (usually two) to go out together with their picks and shovels, and begin to dig in what they considered a promising spot. This they called “prospecting.” But as a rule the Americans discovered most of the mines, worked them down to the hard rock, and then abandoned them for easier fields. Some of the Cornish did likewise, but they gained their reputation as “hard-rock miners” from the fact that they generally stuck to the mine as long as the ore in it lasted; it made little difference to them whether there was hard or soft rock. Often they began their operations in mines abandoned by the early American prospectors.

1 Many of the old Cornish miners say that they would not, in the 30's, have taken as a gift, a piece of land for farming purposes.

The native Cornish miners have always been regarded as superior to the Americans. The *Encyclopœdia Britannica2* says:

2 Ninth edition, vi, p. 426.

“The Cornish miners are an intelligent and independent body of men. They are in request in whatever part of the world mining operations are conducted; and it may be fairly asserted that the solution of every intricate problem in mining geology is generally assigned to a Cornish agent, and every task requiring skill, resource, and courage intrusted to a Cornishman.” They recognize their superiority. Some of those who came in the 30's say that there was no real mining done by the Americans, before the Cornish came. As 320 soon as the rock became hard, the Americans deserted the mines for the

surface diggings, seeking only the “float mineral.”1 The Cornish introduced into the district the safety fuse for blasting; before they came, there was little blasting done; the Americans were surface miners, and consequently had little use for it. The small amount of blasting that was done by them, was crudely done; a succession of quills or straws, filled with powder, led some distance back from the large pile of powder, and was lighted by means of a so-called slow match,2 giving some time for the miners to get out of danger. The safety fuse was the invention of a Cornishman named Davis.3 It was extensively used in Cornwall before the Cornish came here. One end of the fuse is placed on the blast; the other is lighted and burns slowly toward the blast, giving the miners ample time to get out of the mine. However simple this invention may seem, it was nevertheless a great advance in the process of blasting.

1 Float mineral is a quality of lead ore found near the surface.

2 A slow match was a piece of paper twisted into a hard roll, and thoroughly soaked in tallow.

3 It is a small cord filled with combustible matter introduced during the process of manufacture.

The Cornish are a religious people; almost every miner in the old country belonged to some church, nearly all of those coming to Wisconsin being Methodists. In Cornwall, practically all of the working classes, and probably half of the upper classes, belonged to some one of the several branches of this denomination; the Wesleyan Methodists4 are there predominant. What Wesleyanism has done in Cornwall for the miners cannot be overestimated. When the Cornish came to Wisconsin, they were not long in beginning Methodist meetings. They united principally with

4 This was the church established by the Wesleys. There have been many secessions; prominent among these are the Primitive Methodists, who branched because they thought the Wesleyans were departing from the original. The Methodist Associationists branched

on account of discipline. The Bryonites, or Bible Christians, originated in Cornwall, being the followers of a Cornishman named Bryon.

321 the Primitive Methodist and Methodist Episcopal churches, chiefly the latter, which is not found in Cornwall, it being an American organization. No Wesleyan churches were organized. In the organization of nearly every Methodist church in the region, we find a number of Cornish names, showing the active part these people took in church work. What is claimed in these parts to be the first Protestant congregation in Wisconsin,1 was the Methodist Episcopal church of Mineral Point, organized in 1834. Among the organizers we find the names of the following Cornish: William Phillips and wife, Andrew Rumphery, Mrs. S. Thomas, and James Nancarrow. The leading Protestant churches in Dodgeville, Mineral Point, Platteville, Hazel Green, Linden, and Shullsburg are Methodist churches. The Cornish in Dodgeville, Mineral Point, Platteville, and Hazel Green are about evenly divided between the Primitive Methodist and Methodist Episcopal churches. Very few of the Cornish immigrants failed to belong to some church, and all but a few of their descendants have a religious turn of mind.

1 In Neville and Martin's *Historic Green Bay*, p. 239, we read that Christ Church parish (Protestant Episcopal), of Green Bay, was incorporated in 1829, and Rev. Richard F. Cadle called to the rectorship. In Davidson's *Unnamed Wisconsin*, p. 157, it is recorded that “The first organization of a Congregational church within the present limits of Wisconsin took place at La Pointe, 1833, August 20th, Tuesday.”— Ed.

Besides being religious, the early Cornish were superstitious, nor have they entirely outgrown it. Several books have been written upon Cornish superstition. The giant is a favorite character in their folk lore. There are Cornish living in southwest Wisconsin, to-day, who tell of the houses where the giants once lived. No part of England is so rich as Cornwall in antiquities of the primeval period, and the Cornish look upon these huge relics with a superstitious aspect. Then, too, it is not uncommon to hear the old Cornish folk tell of someone being “pisky laaden,” i.e., led astray by the pixies or fairies; anyone who loses

his way, is declared to be “pisky laaden.” The 21 322 only remedy is to turn inside out any piece of clothing the person may happen to be wearing. It is therefore still a common question in Cornwall, when a person is seen with a stocking inside out: “Are 'ee pisky laaden, my dear?” Of course these superstitious ideas have to a large extent passed away in the lead region, but ancestral folk lore is still popular.

The Cornish were not an educated people. Education in Cornwall, before the time of the emigration to Wisconsin, was in a bad condition; there were no free schools in those days. To-day it is quite different there; free schools have been established, and education is compulsory for a certain period each year. About twenty-five per cent of the people in Cornwall are still unable to write,1 though this is ten per cent less than in Wales. It has been estimated by Charles L. Harper,2 assistant state superintendent of schools in Wisconsin, that seventy-five per cent of the Wisconsin immigrants from Cornwall were illiterate. Besides being without free schools, the children of Cornwall were compelled to begin work as soon as they were able. The families were large, wages low, and money scarce. It was a continual struggle for the necessities of life. Probably this fact, rendering it necessary to scheme, and seize upon every opportunity to get a living, made the Cornish sharp and shrewd, as they were, despite their illiteracy. Of whatever education they had, they made most excellent use. They were quick to learn, and used good judgment, except, possibly in the case of sticking to the mines too long. But the Cornish of to-day are not inferior in education to any class in southwest Wisconsin, despite their ancestors' lack of education. The early Cornish took advantage of the first schools established in the lead region, and sent their children to them, as the Americans did.

1 Reclus's *Earth and its Inhabitants*, vi, appendix.

2 Mr. Harper was superintendent of schools in Grant county for thirteen. years, and came into intimate contact with the Cornish.

The Cornish dialect clings to those who have lived in Cornwall, and in many cases to the generation that now occupies 323 southwest Wisconsin. To strangers, the odd words that have been retained from their old language, and the peculiar pronunciation, are noticeable. This dialect is a remnant of the old Cornish tongue, which belongs to the British branch of Celtic languages—the Welsh, the Armoric, and the Cornish. The first two are still live languages, and spoken in Wales and Brittany respectively; the Cornish has ceased to be spoken. These languages were once the same, but geographical separation has brought about changes.1 As a distinct language, the Cornish ceased to be spoken about the middle of the eighteenth century; though it is claimed that some persons living during the first part of the present century could converse fluently in that tongue.2 That dialect that has sprung from this language differs from correct English not only in pronunciation and accent, but also in the use of a small number of words which have come from the old Celtic tongue. There was so little social intercourse carried on between the parishes in Cornwall, that a man's native place could be told by his accent, or peculiar pronunciation. When we remember that the parishes correspond to our townships in size, we get an idea of the social isolation of those days.

1 For a discussion of the whole matter, see *Encyclopœdia Britannica*, article “Celtic Languages.”

2 See article on Cornish language, in *Archœologia*, iii, p. 278.

The dialect of the Cornish in the southwestern part of our State seems a curious mixture to one unaccustomed to it. A number of Cornish words and phrases are used; English words are cut short, and often two or more are run together added to this, we hear the technical terms and phrases of a mining district. With these peculiarities, there is an accent fully as marked as that developed in Yorkshire or any other part of England. It is quite impossible for a stranger fully to understand a conversation carried on by typical Cornish miners, i.e., by miners who have changed little since emigrating from Cornwall. The number of Cornish words that have survived, and are in common use, is comparatively few; the

peculiar expressions 324 are more numerous. The following are some Cornish words and expressions, and combinations of English words, still in use among the “thorough Cornish people” of the old lead region:

Art en , means “are not,” and is used in such a sentence as, “Art en 'ee goin?” ' *Ee* , is short for “thee.”

As lev , is “as leave;” one often hears the expression, “I'd as lev do en as not.”

The bal , is “the mine;” the *bal maidens* are those girls who are engaged about the mines; *balchrope* , is the rope hanging down in the mine.

A *crabit* , is a scarf.

Cligy , is candy.

En , as in French, means him or it.

Braav , means excellent or first class. On meeting each other, the Cornish generally say, “'Ow are 'ee?” or, “'Ow ist 'ee gettin' on, you?”—to which the answer is made, “braav and keenly.”

Chack , is cheek.

Crib , is a lunch; “a bit o' crib” is a common expression among the miners; *croust* is another word meaning lunch.

Click-hand , means left hand.

Dussen 'ee ? means “do you not?” The Cornish often say, “Dussen 'ee know better?” meaning, “don't you know better?”

Fuchin' , is walking lazily or throwing away time, as, “W'at are 'ee doin', fuchin' away so much time?”

Forthy means forward, or bold; as, “'E's a forthy lad.”

The Cornish say *houzen* for houses, and *kicklish* for tottering.

Nist , is used for near; as, “I wussen go nist they kicklish old houzen.”

To “put 'ome the door,”1 is to close it.

1 Oo is here pronounced as in “moon.”

A *navvy* (pronounced *neeavy*), is a section-hand on the railroad. In England, laborers on “public works” are, as a rule, an ignorant lot of fellows, hence the origin of the Cornish expression, “as stupid as a navvy.”

The *nuddick* is the back of one's neck.

Passon and *clark* are used for parson and clerk (the latter is pronounced *clark* , throughout England).

A *planshin* is a wooden floor; a miner's house without a planshin in the first story, was not an uncommon thing in Cornwall fifty years ago.

To *scat* , is to scatter about; to *stank* upon, is to step on or trample under foot; these words may be used in such a sentence as “Dussen 'ee go scat en 'pon the planshin; theest '11 stank 'pon en.”

Show, is pronounced *shaw* .

To *touch pipe* , is to sit down to rest; the miners often say, “ Come, let's touch pipe a bit,”—almost all the Cornish miners are smokers.

325

Wor , is used for was.

Wessen 'ee? , means will you not? as, “Wessen 'ee do this?”

Wish , means sad or pitiful.

A *plump* , is a well.

“Iss,” and “iss you,” are always used for yes.

A *dish o' tay* , is a cup of tea.

A *kiddly-wink* , is a tavern where beer, ale, porter, and “temperance drinks” are kept, but no spirits.

A *passel of traad* , is a lot of good-for-nothing things.

Afore , is used for before.

To *clunk* , is to swallow.

The Cornish say, *gove* for gave, *'zackly* for exactly, *bould* for bold, and *gate* for great.

Cornwall, is pronounced *Carnwell* .

The terms “uncle” and “aunt,” are applied very commonly to old and respected people.

A Cornishman addressing several of his intimate friends and countrymen, will make liberal use of the expression “my dears.”

The Cornish call themselves *Cousin Jacks* .

The following is an extract from *Eight Cornish Temperance Tales* ,1 written in the Cornish dialect. Grumphery Penrose was a disagreeable man, and over-frequented the saloon, the “Jolly Fisherman.”

1 Written by Rev. John Isabell, and published by Netherton and Worth, Truro, Cornwall, Eng. This company publishes many books and pamphlets written in the Oornish dialect.

“Wha's for denner, Kattern?” Grumphery asked one day, on returning from a visit to the “Jolly Fisherman.”

“I've fitted a nice drap of pay soup for 'ee; I knaw you're fond of en,” was Kattern's answer.

“Pay soup! Pay soup agaan! Why ted'n more 'n a day or two sense we had pay soup for denner. I weeant ate it.”

“No sich thing, Grumphery; we eeant had pay soup for more 'n three weeks. What we had a-Saturday, was a drap of cheek of pork brath.”

“Well, brath or soup, I doan't like um and I weeant ate um. Why don't 'ee meeake a paasty now and then, like other women?”

“Cud 'ee ate a bit of paasty, Grumphery? Then you can maake a denner, arter all. I've fitted a paasty for 'ee, to car' weth 'ee to-morrow, but you shall haven now.”

“What have 'ee put in un? ”said Grumphery.

“Aw a beautiful bit of pork, and some roatabega turmuts,” was Kattern's reply.

“Pork and turmuts,” growled her husband. “You do knaw I doan't like un; you are always beeakin' things I ceean't abear. I do believe you do it for the purpose.”

“ Well,” said Kattern, “will 'ee have a cup of tay, and some curring caake? I ceeant offer 'ee nothin' else.”

“No, I weean't. Ar 'ee goin' to starve me outright? Give me a baasin of pay soup.”

The expressions and words given above, are but a few, only, of those common among the typical Cornish; they have merely been picked up at random. Cornish words still linger in the names of persons and places in Cornwall. There are many names that may be called distinctively Cornish. Scott says, in one of his novels:

“By Tre, Pol and Pen, We know the Cornishmen.”

This is amply illustrated in southwest Wisconsin by the scores of names beginning with these prefixes.

Besides these expressions and words there are a few so-called Cornish proverbs that are peculiar and interesting for their originality. Often one hears a Wisconsin Cornishman say, “Salt's a pilchard.” When we remember that the principal fishery in Cornwall is for pilchards, and that they are essentially a Cornish fish, we detect the origin of the expression. Another Cornish phrase is, “Cream 'pon pilchards.” As cream is the height of luxury in Cornwall, while pilchards are common food and in use in every household, the expression means luxury heaped upon the commonplace. If an ordinary man affects too much,—dresses above his means, lives too high, or is vain,—he is likened to “cream 'pon pilchards.” Another peculiar, but common, expression among the Cornish miners, is “'E do knaw tin,” meaning he is wise. This arises from the fact that tin and iron ores are very much alike, when stamped or broken into small pieces; there is but slight difference in the color, and only the experienced miner can distinguish them by sight. The miners have a similar expression, though less used in this country: “'E do knaw prils from 'elvines.” Prils

are pieces of good ore, while the 'elvines are pieces of rock or waste; the expression is used with regard to a person who knows a good thing from a bad one.

327

Some one has said, in substance, that a nation can be judged by the food it prepares, or the table it sets. Judged by this criterion, the Cornish would not be found wanting. Not only do they prepare good food, but they have also a number of dishes peculiar to themselves. One of the most characteristic, is the triangular Cornish pastry.1 Pasties are known in other parts of England, but the Cornish variety is *sui generis* .2 The ordinary light pasties are known in Cornwall as pies. The Cornish pasty, as I have said, is triangular in shape; enclosed entirely by a paste, and baked without a dish. The Cornish have many kinds of pasty, but the *taty paasty* (potato pasty) is the most common. There are meat pasties, turnip pc. sties, apple pasties, and so on, reaching probably to a hundred. There is a legend in Cornwall, that the devil was never there. He came down from the “up country,” to the river Tamer, which separates Devonshire from Cornwall; when he inquired of the Devonshire people what country was beyond the river, they told him not to go over there, or the Cornish would kill him and bake him in a pasty. It serves to illustrate the prominence of the pasty in the Cornish living, as viewed by their neighbors, the Devonshire folk.
The popularity of the Cornish pasty is explained, when we remember that over a third of the Cornishmen are miners, who carry their meals to the mines with them; they desire something not only cheap and substantial, but easy to carry. Every miner takes his pasty to the mine in his blouse pocket, or “fob,” as the Cornishman says. Pilchard and mackerel pies are also common in Cornwall; sweet pies and meat pies are often made in southwest Wisconsin. Cornish pies are not the American variety but much thicker, being baked in deep pans and without a bottom crust.

1 The old Cornishman never says *pasty*, but always *paasty*. In southwest Wisconsin the pronunciation has been corrupted into *pâsty*.

2 Of late, they have been successfully introduced into some parts of Devonshire.—Halliwell's *Rambles in West Cornwall*, p. 40.

Saffron cake is one of the rather common articles of food in Cornwall, though deemed a luxury. This is the 328 characteristic Cornish cake; our sweet cakes were practically unknown in Cornwall during the Cornish immigration to Wisconsin. Saffron cake is much like sweetened bread,1 filled with candied lemon, raisins, and currants; it is both flavored and colored with the saffron. The cake has a yellowish color and a delicious flavor. Saffron was once raised in England, but is now imported from Spain, Italy, and France; almost all of it now shipped into London is sent on to Cornwall. It is the custom in southwest Wisconsin, among the Cornish, to bake large quantities of saffron cake every Christmas, and to exchange samples with neighbors and friends.

1 To call saffron cake “saffron bread,” is to almost insult a Cornish woman.

Another dish, once exclusively Cornish, is “scalded cream,” or “clotted cream.” At one time this was known as “Cornish cream,” but is now often called “Devonshire cream.” To-day it is largely used in the southern and middle counties of England, and is a considerable article of domestic commerce. It is made by bringing the milk to a boiling point; the cream on top becomes clotted, and is much richer than raw cream. The word cream, in Cornwall, means clotted cream,—or “scalded cream,” as it is better known in southwest Wisconsin. This dish is a common one among the Cornish in the lead region, and is also relished by Americans. The Cornish pasty and saffron cake are also found in every Cornish household in the lead district. Besides these, there are a number of Cornish dishes, less common in our State, though still familiar in Cornwall, such as “heavy cake,” “taty cake,” “plum hoggan,” “figgy hoggan,” etc. The early Cornish immigrants say that a workingmen's meal in Cornwall, at the time they left, consisted principally of pilchards, and potatoes boiled with the jackets on. One thing that the Cornish gained by coming to America was good fare—much better than that to which they were accustomed at home.

Every parish in Cornwall has, once a year, a parish feast. Then all these Cornish dishes come into play. 329 The origin of the feasts is not certain; probably they are the anniversaries of the dedications of the parish churches.

As already stated, many Cornish miners went directly from their native land to California, for a few years after 1850. Then, on the discovery of gold in Australia and the neighboring islands, a large proportion of emigrants from Cornwall went to these new fields. When the mines were opened in Colorado,1 the Cornish flocked there. Of late years they have been going to the copper mines of Lake Superior, although there were many in that district in the 60's. Many of the head captains of the mines of Lake Superior to-day, are Cornish, and nearly all of the underground captains and workmen are of the same nationality. At the present time, a large number of Cornish miners are leaving Cornwall for the gold fields of Africa.

1 There is a large settlement about Leadville. During the summer of 1895, a Cornish picnic was held there, which was attended by nearly 300 miners of that nationality.

In southwest Wisconsin, since many of the mines have ceased to be worked, the Cornish have, like the Americans, turned into other occupations. Probably more have gone into farming than into any other line of business. While this. is true, many more live in the villages than in the country. The mining that is carried on in the old Wisconsin lead region to-day, is for zinc ores mostly, and the Cornish do not take any prominent part in it.

The Cornish are not clannish. They originally settled in groups, principally because there were good mines there. The occupation they followed could not be found everywhere. It is said that it is hard to find a Cornishman outside of a mining district; there is much truth in this statement, for the miners form the principal class, indeed almost the only class of Cornish that emigrates. From the first the Cornish united with the Americans, in all mining operations. The Cornish of the second generation can seldom. be detected from the ordinary Englishman, except by an occasional Cornish word. There is no special

bond among 330 the descendants of those Cornish who emigrated from Cornwall, nor are the Cornish here in close communication with the mother country. There are no national societies; and while many of the Cornish immigrants in their lifetime kept up a correspondence with Cornwall, the second generation has almost entirely dropped it, although an occasional Cornish newspaper is received in the region. The Cornish descendants are scattering, and have almost lost their identity as a race. They do not hesitate to marry with other nationalities, any more than other English would. Not many Cornish in the lead region to-day, were born in Cornwall. Nearly all of the original immigrants have died. The oldest Cornish settlers living in the region at the present time, came in 1837; even those who came in 1840 are scarce.

The Cornish in southwest Wisconsin are in fair circumstances, financially, although few or none became wealthy. No one has acquired a fortune out of the mines; if any one made money, it was reinvested until a large part was lost. The people in the lead region who have accumulated wealth, are those who bought the land in early days and held on to it. Great quantities of lead and zinc ores have been taken out, but the proceeds have been well distributed. No large companies have been formed in the region, to concentrate the profits. The Cornish have had their proportion of these profits; for, besides being good miners, they are very good judges of “prospects.” Their first intention of coming to America, getting rich, and returning to Cornwall, was not realized; and though they did not get rich, they considered the conditions into which they had come, far better than those they had left.

Pauperism among the Cornish of Wisconsin is not above the average, and probably does not reach it, if poor-house statistics are any criterion. This is theoretically confirmed by the physique of the Cornish, and their industrious disposition. The poor-houses of La Fayette, Grant, and Iowa counties had the following proportion of Cornish inmates in 1895: La Fayette county, 4 out of a total of 26, or 15 per cent; 331 Iowa county, 8 out of a total of 16, or nearly 19 per cent; Grant county had no Cornish out of a total of thirty-one inmates. The total population of Grant, Iowa, and La Fayette counties in 1890 was 79,000. In these

three counties there were, in 1895, 73 inmates of poor-houses, or, in other words, one inmate to each 1080 of population. On the other hand, there were seven Cornish inmates out of an estimated Cornish population of 9,000 in Wisconsin; in other words, there was one Cornish pauper to every 1,800 Cornish.

In Wisconsin, a large majority of the Cornish are Republicans, while the remainder are divided between the Prohibitionists and the Democrats. Just why so many are Republicans, is hard to say; possibly anti-slavery ideas, and the tariff on lead, had something to do in the matter. The Cornish are not party leaders; they do not become enthusiastic over practical politics. In the county and State elections, they have not had their proportion of candidates; possibly this was due in the past to their lack of education, but that is no reason to-day. Twelve Cornishmen have represented the lead district in the Wisconsin assembly, viz.: Joseph Bennett, John Toay, Richard Tregaskis, John H. Vivian; William E. Rowe, and John Gay, of Iowa county; George Broderick, Thomas Jenkins, George Stephens, Joseph Harris, John Casthew, and James Jeffery of Grant county. Three of these were Democrats, eight Republicans, and one Liberal.

While the Prohibition party is not strong in the southwestern part of the State, nevertheless many Cornishmen are in sympathy with its principles. The old Cornish settlers were almost all beer drinkers; Cornwall, during the early part of this century, was noted for its consumption of beer. It was the custom for the Cornish miners in Cornwall to spend their half-holiday—Saturday afternoon—in the “kiddly-wink,” drinking beer and having a social time. When they came to Wisconsin, they left work, as usual, at Saturday noon, and spent the afternoon in the customary manner. The Cornish say they did this chiefly 332 for social reasons, for they certainly were not more addicted to drinking than the Americans; the principal difference lay in the fact that the Cornish drank beer, and the Americans whiskey. To-day, the situation is much changed; the Cornish are not the beer consumers they were fifty years ago. Further than this, some of them have become total abstainers; there are many such among the Cornish of the second generation—the proportion is very high. This statement is based upon the fact that the Good Templar lodges in Dodgeville, Mineral

Point, and Hazel Green have an unusually large number of Cornish enrolled as members —many more than their proportion. This was also the case with the old Shullsburg lodge of that order.

The record of the Cornish in war, is not a bad one. There were not many Cornish in the lead region when the Black Hawk War broke out, but almost every one who was here served in that affair. To determine the record of the Cornish in the War of Secession, with any degree of exactness, is extremely difficult. We do not know the number of Cornish in the lead region at this time, neither can we distinguish the Cornish who enlisted, by merely reading over the roster. There seems to be a difference of opinion as to whether the Cornish furnished their proper proportion; it seems certain, however, that they did not furnish more than their share. Many of the Cornish had not, at that time, been here more than ten or fifteen years, and naturally they would not have the patriotism of the people who had been born and raised in the country. Nevertheless, we know that the southwestern part of the State had an excellent record in the war. Some of the counties furnished many more soldiers than required. One of the first companies formed in the State, upon the first call of President Lincoln, was formed in Mineral Point, where about a third of the population was Cornish; this was Company I, 2nd regiment of Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry and familiarly known as the “Miners' Guard.” Gen. Thomas S. Alien, now of Oshkosh, was its captain. In a letter dated May 13, 1896, he says: “As near as I 333 can tell after looking over the roster of Co. I, 2nd Wis. Vol. Infy., there were about thirty men whom I recognize as Cornishmen.” In the whole company, officers and all, there were about ninety men; we see from this that the Cornish furnished fully their proportion in this early company. The first lieutenant of the company1 was a Cornishman Shortly after this, another company was organized in Mineral Point—Company E, of the 11th regiment, known as the “Farmers' Guard.” General Alien, speaking of this company, says that it “had twenty men of the same nationality.” This is much more than the Cornish proportion of farmers in the neighborhood, at that time. Whether the same condition of affairs existed in all the Cornish settlements in the lead region, is difficult to ascertain. No Cornishman

attained any position of great prominence during the war. Says General Allen: “Dr. J. H. Vivian was surgeon of one of our regiments, Ned Devlin and Thomas Priestly, all of Mineral Point, were captains in the 30th regiment. On the whole, the Cornish were as loyal as the Americans, and made good soldiers. The business men of the same nationality were mostly patriotic—and helped fill our ranks. Dodgeville, Linden, and Mineral Point were largely Cornish, and turned out many good soldiers.”

1 Thomas Bishop.

Such, in a degree, is the history and condition of the Cornish in the southwestern part of our State. When we think of the typical Cornishman,—he who came over previous to 1850,—we think of that old Cornish miner who goes off to his work every morning with lunch in hand and pipe in mouth, seemingly happy and contented. We think of that old Cornish miner with a beard under his chin—a rather stout man, not very tall, and slightly stooped from the nature of his calling; a man who has had very little education, but is exceedingly shrewd and practical with what he has. We think of the man who is very quiet, kind-hearted, simple, and sympathetic in his actions, who stops his work every Saturday noon and spends the afternoon in greeting his fellow miners, smoking and indulging 334 in his accustomed glass of beer. Then, on Sunday morning, he attires himself in his best, and attends every meeting held in the Methodist church during the day. And his wife—well, she is one of the most hospitable women one would care to meet; like her husband, simple, true, kind-hearted, and religous. Very probably she has been a “bal maiden” in Cornwall, but has found time to learn to cook well, and makes a little go a long way. She is always begging the callers to stay and have “a dish o' tay,” and even then seems afraid that the guests will not eat enough of the scalded cream, saffron cake, pasty, or whatever happens to be upon the table. Thus these peculiar characters, agreeable not only among themselves but also to their neighbors, live a peaceful and contented life, day after day and year after year. But these typical Cornish characters are gradually disappearing, and soon the class that did so much in early days to develop the lead region, will live only in

the remembrance of those who have seen them. Soon, history alone will record in kind words the acts and deeds of the Cornish in southwest Wisconsin.